A

PLAIN AND RATIONAL

ACCOUNT

OF THE

NATURE AND EFFECTS

OF

ANIMAL MAGNETISM:

IN A

SERIES OF LETTERS.

WITH

NOTES AND AN APPENDIX.

BY THE EDITOR.

Mirabile videtur, quod non rideat Haruſpex, cum Haruſpicem viderit.

CICERO.

LONDON:

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BRITISH MUSEUM

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SIR,

THE ſceptical air, with which you liſtened to my relation of the powers and effects of Animal Magnetiſm, did not excite in me any emotions of ſurpriſe. I was once equally as incredulous as you may be, and without arrogating to myſelf any uncommon ſhare of logical powers, or rhetorical ſkill, I will venture to predict, that before the termination of our correſpondence, you will be as cordial a believer as myſelf.

Permit me, however, to remind you, that during our late converſation, when Philoſophy and reaſoning, had without effect exhauſted their artillery, you took refuge in ridicule :—But Ridicule, Sir, ought not to be regarded as the teſt of truth; for it has always been found much eaſier to laugh at an argument, than to give a pertinent reply. You requeſt me to ſend you an account of this new Science, to be conſidered at your

leiſure. I embrace the taſk you have impoſed with pleaſure, as it will enable me at once to gratify your curioſity, and to do juſtice to thoſe important diſcoveries, which being little underſtood, have been unworthily treated.

It has been frequently objected by others, as well as yourſelf, that the powers aſcribed to Animal Magnetiſm, "are not conformable to any of the known laws of matter and motion."—I readily grant the truth of this aſſertion; but muſt beg permiſſion to add, that if this were an argument of any weight, it might be produced againſt every new diſcovery in Philoſophy.

There was a time, Sir, when the Phenomena of Electricity were not accommodated "to any known laws:"—There was a time when a propoſal to ſail with ſafety through the Air, would have been treated as a ſenſeleſs Chimera by the learned, and branded as a magical exploit by the vulgar; and yet theſe wonders are now become familiar, and are eaſily explained on natural principles. The daily diſcoveries that are made of new and unexpected properties in natural things, ought therefore to teach modeſty to the ſceptical objector, and impoſe ſilence upon the petulance of haſty criticiſm.

You believe, Sir, I ſuppoſe, that the Electric fluid is pretty generally diffuſed: You believe that the ſeveral appearances exhibited by the Magnet, may be ſolved by the

the hypotheſis of a fluid circulating in a certain direction through Magnetic ſubſtances: and why may not I believe with equal reaſon, the preſence and circulation of a ſubtile, active, and potent fluid, through the ſeveral Syſtems of Animal matter, with whoſe agency, the ſeveral Phenomena of health and diſeaſe, are intimately connected? To tell me, that the fluid for whoſe exiſtence I contend, is inviſible, intangible, not cognizable by any of the ſenſes, is only urging that which may be retorted with equal advantage, againſt your own ſchemes of attraction, Magnetiſm, &c. Here then, at leaſt, we ſtand upon equal ground; and although the truth of my Theory has not yet admitted of a ſenſible demonſtration, this is only a defect common with it to a multitude of other ſchemes, and may perhaps, be rather referred to the narrowneſs of human intellect, than to any thing actually unintelligible in the nature of the ſubject.

But I begin to be apprehenſive, that too much has been granted, in allowing that its exiſtence cannot be demonſtrated. If you require me indeed, to render it an object of your ſight, feeling, or any other external ſenſe, your demand certainly exceeds the powers of any of our fraternity. But excuſe me, Sir, when I ſay, that we look with pity upon the man, who requires ſuch a groſs and ſenſual ſpecies of demonſtration as this. Any peaſant that has the uſe of his

eyes can contemplate an object of ſight ;— the moſt confined capacity may derive information from tangible objects.

Beſides, as Philoſophers are generally agreed, that the ſenſes are perpetually impoſing fallacies upon the judgement, we have agreed to reject and diſclaim their authority ; and to employ more noble and brilliant faculties, in examining the nature of a fluid, whoſe eſſential qualities are too rare and ſubtile, ever to be made the ſubject of a natural experiment. Without pretending to claim any ſuperior powers of excogitation, we are contented to ſuggeſt, that an adept in this ſcience, can diſcern that which is inviſible to all the non-initiated ; he can perceive cauſes and effects neceſſarily connected in an endleſs ſeries, where an ordinary Philoſopher could only flounce about in the dark ; and he rules with abſolute dominion over a fluid more penetrating and active, than the Alkaheſt of Paracelſus, or the Ether of Sir Iſaac Newton.

It is a fundamental principle in this new Syſtem, that the Animal-Magnetic fluid pervades and circulates through every fibre of the body; it confers ſenſation on the nerves, gives motion to the muſcles, and is the grand ſource of thoſe various energetic actions, by which the vital, natural, and animal functions are performed. From this repreſentation, it is extremely obvious, that the moſt compendious

pendious way to become a Phyſician, muſt be, to acquire the maſtery over this univerſal agent. We claim the merit of poſſeſſing this *deſideratum*, and as the fluid is reduced to a ſtate of perfect obedience to our commands, if the body be paralytic, we excite ſuch ſtrong vibrations in the inactive nerves, that they are ſuddenly rouſed into ſenſibility. Let a part be contracted, debilitated, or even waſted, it is ſufficient to direct a ſtream of this noble medicine through its centre, and the moveleſs maſs muſt infallibly ſtart into the moſt lively and vigorous actions. If this fluid be thrown with unuſual rapidity thro' the upper orifice of the ſtomach, it excites powerful eructations; apply it to the middle of that organ, and it will produce vomiting; and when it is made to act upon a more inferior part, it will operate as a cathartic.

I have often thought, that the curious effects which electricians have aſcribed to negative and poſitive electricity, are all diſplayed to great advantage by the Animal Magnetic fluid. By exciting a turbinated motion in its integrant parts, and then throwing it with great velocity through the body, it will excite a ſort of ſtorm in the animal frame, and produce that admirable Phenomenon the CRISIS: But when we ſuppreſs its inordinate motions, and compel it to move in a contrary direction, the exceſſive quantity is ſubſtracted, a delightful lan-

guor

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guor ſteals upon the patient, and he ſinks into the arms of ſleep.

I make no doubt, but your curioſity will now excite you to enquire, by what ſkill we have ſubjugated this extraordinary fluid, and rendered it thus obedient to all our dictates. "By the ſame methods ſaid a malicious op- "ponent, which the Wizards of Lapland "employ to control the wind." This inſinuation is, however, the reſult of conſummate ignorance;—the method cannot be divulged; for upon this point, we have all ſworn to maintain an inviolable ſecrecy. Some people have affected to harbour unfavourable ſuſpicions, of what they are pleaſed to call dark and enigmatical proceedings; and others, who pretend to be religious, uncharitably inſinuate, that our ſolemn oaths of initiation are profanations of the moſt ſacred things. But ſuch malignant accuſations are not worthy our attention; and he muſt poſſeſs very little intrepidity, who is to be awed by the ſcruples or clamours of the vulgar.

Valuable noſtrums, and important Arcana, abound in every department of the community; nor will there ever be a dearth of envious, or diſappointed men, to brand the fortunate adventurers as impudent buffoons, or grave impoſtors.

The teachers of the Magnetic ſcience are however men of the moſt liberal principles; they

they do not design to bury their important secrets in their own bosoms. They deliver Lectures upon this curious and interesting subject at a very moderate expence, so that if your curiosity be not gratified to its utmost extent, no one ought to bear the blame but yourself.*

I am, Sir,

Yours, &c.

LETTER II.

LONDON.

SIR,

IF I conceive rightly of your meaning, you seem to argue thus: "As the effects produced by Animal Magnetism lie under the control of the Magnetiser's fingers, the powers so directed must be material and tangible, consequently they are susceptible of sensible demonstration."—Again, "If the Magnetic fluid be an object of your

* The Magnetic Academy, like the school of Aristotle, divides its disciples into two distinct classes. The exotericks, or the half-initiated, only give five and twenty guineas for their instructions: but the Acroaticks pay the moderate sum of fifty guineas, to be completely equipped in the theory and practice. *Ed.*

your ſenſes, it may be rendered evident and ſenſible to the ſenſes of another; but if it be not an object of ſenſe, by what means was it firſt detected?"

I confeſs, Sir, that arguments like theſe, may have ſome weight with thoſe who have been accuſtomed to the vulgar modes of philoſophizing, but they make no impreſſion upon the Magnetic Hypotheſis. Men of moderate ſized underſtandings, may obtain ſome ſcanty notions of things, by the dull and tedious way of noting facts, making experiments, and forming concluſions upon duly verified premiſes; but we are emancipated from ſuch Philoſophical fetters; and if I might preſume to make the compariſon, as when the pregnant cranium of Jupiter ſuffered the pangs of parturition, ſo our theories burſt from the narrow priſon of the brain, and like *Minerva* ſtand before their author, faultleſs and complete. Nor ought you from hence to conclude, that theſe creatures of the underſtanding, have no exiſtence, but in the imagination that gave them birth; they have produced prodigious effects, and it is upon this ground, that I mean to defend the practice of Animal Magnetiſm, in the preſent letter.

When this new Science was firſt taught and practiſed in the capital, and viſitors were permitted to be eye-witneſſes of its wonderful powers, I was urged by an eager curio-

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ſity to make one in the number of ſpectators. My mind had by various means become greatly prejudiced againſt the operators, ſo that I went with a full perſuaſion that they were jugglers, who were practiſing fraud and impoſition upon the credulous. But no ſooner had I entered the apartments, where the grand atchievements of Magnetic energy were diſplayed, than I felt as by magic influence, my light incredulity chilled into timorous apprehenſion. Never did the cave of Trophonius more inſtantly diſſipate flippancy and laughter. My attention was ſoon directed to the great diſpenſer of Magnetic influence, who had juſt begun to operate upon, or in other words, to *treat* a lady of diſtinction. He directed his eyes towards hers, with a fixed and penetrating ſtare, which ſoon produced the intended perturbation; for the due management of the Eye is a very eſſential auxiliary in this proceſs.*

Whether there be any analogy between the Eyes of the Doctor, and the organs of viſion in

* Thoſe who undertake to manage inſane people, derive great aſſiſtance from the power of the eye over their unhappy patients. They can frequently by one ſteady look, awe them into quietneſs and ſubmiſſion. Poor Rouſſeau complained moſt eloquently of the terrible eyes of David Hume, and from this circumſtance, many people have ſuppoſed that he was out of his ſenſes. May we draw a ſimilar concluſion concerning the ſtate of thoſe who are agitated by the ſtare of the Magnetic Doctor? *Ed.*

in thoſe foreign ſnakes, who decoy their prey by barely looking at it, I cannot determine; there is evidently ſome ſimilarity in the effects:—but leaving the inveſtigation of that point, I proceed to obſerve, that in the preſent caſe, he propoſed to direct the ſtream of fluid through the ſtomach of his patient. The Doctor accordingly began to writhe his fingers in ſeveral directions with ſurpriſing agility; theſe contortions, were quickly ſucceeded by ſympathetic motions in the patient, who began to heave and vomit in a moſt extraordinary manner; but whether the doſe was too powerful for her frame, or that ſome inadvertence had occurred in the mode of adminiſtration, its influence was propagated to the bowels, and excited actions there, which delicacy forbids me to mention.

I was not a little aſtoniſhed to find that the doctor was aſſiſted by ſeveral female pupils, and in a diſtant part of the room, I ſaw a ſtout young fellow ſound aſleep, under the magic influence of a female magnetiſer. As there was a conſiderable number of patients of both ſexes in the room, the wonderful effects of Animal Magnetiſm, ruſhed upon all my ſenſes at once in the moſt powerful manner. Some patients on my right hand, were happily delivered of a conſiderable quantity of impriſoned air, which the Doctor extricated with great facility; not a few were

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in fits; in others, the ſtomach was pouring out its contents; and ſome I ſuſpect experienced a thorough cleanſing of the whole maſs of humours. Now I have the misfortune to poſſeſs the ſenſe of ſmelling in great perfection, and am troubled with a ſqueamiſh ſtomach; ſo that I aſſure you, it required more than an ordinary ſhare of fortitude to maintain my ground.

A little experience has taught me, however, that Animal Magnetiſm is a ſovereign remedy againſt thoſe ſcrupulous niceties, and prudiſh delicacies, which the people of this nation ſtill affect, notwithſtanding our long and familiar intercourſe with the leſs reſerved foreigners. Would you believe it, Sir, that people under the influence of this charming panacea, find a wonderful eaſe in permitting any natural function to proceed, without feeling the leaſt embarraſſment, from the preſence of a numerous aſſembly. This circumſtance may in time have a happy effect upon our manners as well as our health, for reaſons too obvious to be mentioned.

The facts I have already recited, may appear rather extraordinary, but they are greatly inferior in magnitude and importance to the *criſis*. By the *criſis*, is to be underſtood, a violent and univerſal convulſion of the whole frame, attended with a temporary derangement of the ſenſes. This method is

employed in certain-diſorders where it is neceſſary to give a grand ſhock to the Animal Syſtem, that obſtructions of every kind may be removed, and the circulating fluids be quickened in their motions,

Whenever the operator judges it neceſſary to raiſe a tempeſt of this kind, you will ſee the ſubject of his power upon the firſt onſet, almoſt ſtrangled with flatulencies; every feature of her face becomes frightfully diſtorted; her Eyes roll with a furious wildneſs; white foam is violently ejected from the mouth; and every fibre of the body ſeems to palpitate and agonize. The ſight of a ſpectacle like this, appeared at firſt very tremendous: It recalled to my remembrance the ſtory of the Pythoneſs dragged to the awful tripod; and the ſtill more horrid tales of diabolical poſſeſſions. But theſe ridiculous qualms ſoon ſubſided. I thought it reaſonable, that a power which could intimately pervade the very atoms that conſtitute the fabrick, might alſo be equal to all theſe ſtrange effects; and as the Doctor aſſured me he could at all times ſuſpend theſe operations, I gave myſelf no more uneaſineſs upon the ſubject.

It has been pretended by ſome people, that violent impreſſions made upon a weak, or diſordered imagination, would be adequate to the production of the ſeveral appearances exhibited in the *criſis*: and it has been maliciouſly

liciouſly inſinuated, that magnetiſers are ſucceſsful, in proportion to their dominion over the fancy.

To theſe calumnies I might reply, that if good be done, though through the medium of the imagination, no one ought to complain, the patient obtains his cure, and the Doctor receives his fees, ſo that the benefits are reciprocal. But as ill-nature and prepoſſeſſion, are indiſpoſed to liſten to any evidence contrary to their wiſhes, I ſhall leave theſe ſuggeſtions to their own fate.

I remain, Sir,

Yours, &c.

LETTER III.

LONDON.

SIR,

FROM among the numerous and hitherto unheard of effects which take place in thoſe who are thrown into a *criſis*, I ſhall ſelect two of the moſt remarkable, for your preſent entertainment. In the firſt place you are to underſtand, that when a Man is thus completely reduced under Magnetic influ-

influence, although he ſhould ſeem to be poſſeſſed of his ſenſes, yet he ceaſes to be an accountable creature. You may if you pleaſe, call this a bold paradox, and charge me with uttering extravagant notions, but I will appeal from your ſtartled imagination, to the teſt of experience. You know that there is no point of honour upon which men are more exquiſitely delicate, than in giving or receiving the *Lie direct*. But Magnetiſm can remove this dangerous ſcrupuloſity. Let your footman be thrown into a Criſis, and he may not only inſult his maſter, but give the lie to the firſt man in the kingdom with perfect impunity.* •

Men of nice feelings may be ſhocked at the recital of ſuch plain dealing, but a little reflection will convince moderate people, that this liberty of ſpeech may be attended with prodigious advantages. It is an old maxim, that the naked truth ſeldom ſalutes the Ears of the great, but this difficulty may now be removed by our wonder-working ſcience.

Whenever

* This is literally and rigorouſly true. An impudent footman ſprawling in a counterfeited convulſion, gave the Lie to a nobleman before a public company; and, hear, O ye men of ſenſibility and honour, he eſcaped the merited chaſtiſement of kicking or caneing! his lordſhip with great condeſcenſion continued to chat with him in a very familiar way. *Ed.*

Whenever a man of Quality is diſpoſed to hear of his errors or ignorances, he may order his valet to be thrown into a criſis, and his Lordſhip will not fail to be treated with a freedom which upon any other occaſion, would be deemed inſufferable inſolence. It needs no great ſagacity to foreſee that this remarkable privilege is liable to abuſe, but you know, Sir, that the beſt things are capable of the greateſt corruptions. • I am well aware, that thoſe minds which are yet fettered with vulgar opinions, will not readily conceive, how Animal Magnetiſm can emancipate a man from civil and moral obligations; to theſe people I ſhall only reply, that I pity the narrowneſs of their intellectual faculties, and adviſe them not to cenſure, what they do not underſtand. •

Another remarkable prerogative conferred upon the ſubject of the *Criſis*, is, that of perfect and unobſtructed viſion; or in other words, all opacity is removed, and every object becomes luminous and tranſparent. It will be in vain for you to oppoſe any objections, founded upon the nature of light and viſion, againſt my aſſertion; the merits of the cauſe ſhall reſt upon fair and open experiments. I do not intend to affirm, that every perſon in a criſis is poſſeſſed of this extraordinary faculty; •but it is a notorious fact, that ſome highly favoured ones have declared, they could tell you the hour of the day

day by your watch, when it is locked up in your drawer; and could read a book of moderate ſized print, by looking at it thro' a Millſtone.* "

" It is unneceſſary for me to expatiate, upon the numerous advantages that muſt reſult, from the application of this Lyncean power to medical purpoſes. Phyſicians are frequently at a loſs to aſſign the preciſe cauſe and ſeat of internal diſeaſes; and we know that a judgement founded upon ſymptoms and reaſoning, muſt be liable to great uncertainty." Indeed, the very illuſtrious diviner by Urine, has diſcovered a much more compendious, way to the detection of diſeaſes, than that which is generally taught in the ſchools of medicine; but his ſkill, tho' confeſſedly great, cannot aſpire to a competition with that of the man in a *Criſis*."

Here we have at length, obtained that long wiſhed-for *deſideratum*, the art of looking into the inſide of a patient, in order to learn the nature of his complaint. I cannot indeed upon this point ſpeak from actual experience, as I never had the curioſity to ſuffer

* Let not the gentle reader ſuſpect that the defender of Magnetiſm, is led by enthuſiaſtic fondneſs to the verge of exaggeration. The ſhameleſs teachers of this Syſtem of Abſurdity had the effrontery to propagate, and their diſciples the ſimplicity to defend, theſe monſtrous pretenſions. *Ed.*

ſuffer a criſis in my own perſon; but the experiment has been ſo frequently repeated, that the Doctor maintains the fact, with the ſame fearleſs confidence, for which he is ſo notorious upon every other point of the Magnetic doctrine.

Let a perſon labouring under any diſeaſe whatever, be only brought within the ſphere of viſion, of one in a Criſis, and the patient inſtantly becomes tranſparent before him. By virtue of this literal intuition, chalk-ſtones have been diſcovered ſwimming in the blood-veſſels, bile obſtructing the nerves, wind in the liver, and maggots in the brain. No perſon can for a moment entertain a doubt, that very valuable benefits may be derived from the diſcreet exerciſe of this power; and yet the friends to Magnetiſm, have been groſſly inſulted upon this very point by your ſceptical Philoſophers: ſome of theſe men, have even had the effrontery to offer our great Profeſſor a ſum of money, to favour them with a Specimen of his gifts, in this way; but his dignity of ſoul, would not ſuffer him to be bribed into an oſtentatious diſplay of this eminent faculty.

I very well remember, that when I firſt ventured to hint at this effect of Magnetic influence to a Philoſophical friend, he very charitably ſuppoſed me to have loſt my ſenſes; and with great politeneſs, made that a pretence for declining any farther converſation

upon the ſubject. But he was not ſuffered to eſcape by the help of ſuch a ſorry evaſion; I urged him upon this point with ſo much vehemence of argumentation, that at length I compelled him to reply.—It would be as eaſy, ſaid he, to ſee to the centre of the Earth, as to ſee through the body of a Man. —Moſt aſſuredly it would, nor ought we from hence preſumptuouſly to aſſign the limits of powers and properties, ſo far exceeding our comprehenſion.—But to examine a morbid body, ſo as to diſcover the ſeat of any particular complaint, requires conſiderable ſkill in Anatomy; and yet by your account it ſeems, that the Doctor's footman, or cook, are occaſionally employed to execute this important ſervice: How came they to be ſo knowing, as inſtantly to recognize any morbid deviation?—Why Sir, the ſame power that can confer ſuch perſpicacious opticks, can likewiſe remove all opacity from mental viſion.—Very profound, indeed Sir! but you ſeem to have forgotten, that opacity, or tranſparency, are properties of the object, and not of the organ of ſight: Now do you mean to ſay, that the *Criſis* as you call it, renders opaque bodies at a diſtance diaphanous; or does it make the Animal in convulſions ſo very ſharp ſighted, that he can ſee where no light is tranſmitted?—Excuſe me, Sir, theſe are trite and vulgar objections; they may have ſome force

force when applied to people in an ordinary ſtate, but Animal Magnetiſm is without analogy, it bears no reſemblance to any one Phenomenon in nature.—I verily believe it, replied my friend, and immediately quitted the room. As my antagoniſt had thus haſtily retired from the field, I exulted in my victory, and am not without hopes, that from an adverſary, he may become a convert to Magnetiſm.

I will, however, frankly confeſs, that the wonderful viſual powers conferred by the *Criſis*, ought not to have been divulged in ſo publick a manner; nay, this openneſs and ingenuity, may be inimical to the intereſt of the operator.

Suppoſe for inſtance, that a Lady of virtue and delicacy ſhould require the Doctor's aſſiſtance, were ſhe to conceive that ſhe is more perfectly expoſed to the Eyes of his footman, than the naked ſavages of America, falſe delicacy, and the prejudices of Education, might induce her to reject this ſalutary remedy. Beſides, this power of minute inſpection, is capable of being perverted and miſapplied, to the great inconvenience of the Patient.

I had once an opportunity of obſerving a curious inſtance, where a Magnetiſer's ſenſe of touch had acquired a degree of perfection, equal to that which I have related of the organ of ſight; for as in the latter inſtance they can ſee without light, ſo in that which I am

going to relate, he could *feel* without the contact of a tangible object.

The Doctor was ſeriouſly engaged in Magnetiſing a Gentleman, when he ſuddenly cried out with a rapture equal to that which agitated *Archimedes*, when he jumped out of the bath, and ran naked into the ſtreet, "I have found them," "I have got them." "Got hold of what," ſaid the Patient, ſomewhat amazed. "I have caught hold of two worms, Sir," replied the Doctor, "I feel them between my fingers." Tho' the patient did not ſee them, yet he believed, and was delighted; and the whole company departed with emotions that are eaſier to be conceived of, than expreſſed.

I remain, Sir,

Yours, &c.

LETTER IV.

LONDON.

SIR,

IT was once my intention, to have ſent you a more ample account of the *Criſis*, and its wonderful concomitants; but as you wiſh for information upon a different part of the

the ſubject, I ſhall proceed to give you the ſatisfaction you deſire.

When the Science of Animal Magnetiſm was firſt employed in a medical way, the directors of the proceſs, were leſs ſkilful than their preſent ſucceſſors. They employed a formidable and unweildy apparatus, conſiſting of a large tub, perforated with a great number of holes, and through theſe apertures iron rods were made to project, for the purpoſes of conveying, and directing the Magnetic effluvium. But theſe were days of ignorance, and groſsneſs of invention.

We have now no occaſion for reſervoirs to contain the Magnetic fluid, nor for extraneous aſſiſtance to convey it to the morbid part: Our Profeſſor is always full charged in his own body, and in beholding him, you ſee the moſt faultleſs edition of a *Materia Medica*, that was ever ſent abroad. Like the ingenious ſpider, he is continually employed in pouring forth the contents of his own bowels, to alleviate the ſufferings and ſorrows of his fellow creatures.

It has been pretended by ſome people, that the Magnetiſers carry certain ſubtile ſubſtances in their pockets, ſo that the numerous cures they perform, are wrought by the efficacy of Medicinal effluvia. But nothing can be leſs true than this ſlanderous imputation. If it were neceſſary for me to adduce particular proofs of this aſſertion, I could

could demonſtrate, that they are not at all indebted to Phyſical agents for their ſucceſs; for they have contrived to maintain a profound ignorance, concerning every thing that relates to the practice of Medicine.

There are ſo many advantages attending this new method of treating diſeaſes, that it threatens annihilation to the Phyſicians and Apothecaries; you ought not to be ſurpriſed therefore to find, that the faculty oppoſe with ſuch firmneſs, this dangerous innovation.

When a ſick perſon chooſes to be cured by *Treatment*, (a new technical name we have lately adopted) he is entirely delivered from all the nauſeous potions, which ordinary Practitioners are accuſtomed to preſcribe; his palate will never be diſguſted, nor his ſtomach offended, by Chymical or Galenical compounds. As nothing can be more eaſy, ſo no method of cure can be half ſo diverting, as that by Animal Magnetiſm. The patient is only required to ſit in his chair for about half an hour every day, in the preſence of the Magnetic Doctor, who employs ſo many curious grimaces, and ſingular geſticulations, in diſlodging the complaint, that the low ſpirits of a Hypochondriac, muſt infallibly be refreſhed by obſerving them. The expenſe, may indeed equal that which is incurred by the uſual mode of recovery, but any ſenſible man would rather pay his money to be cured with-

without medicine, than be obliged to ſwallow the drugs, and pay into the bargain.

The *certainty* attending this method of cure, has a ſtill greater claim to our notice; for it may be ſaid of Animal Magnetiſm, that it never fails to do good to one of the parties, which is more than can be at all times ſaid for the practice of Phyſick. Some of our fraternity, have honeſtly confeſſed, that on making attempts to adminiſter medicines in the uſual way, it was ſeldom with ſucceſs; and as defamatory reports were circulated, that ſome patients were unexpectedly hurried into the other world, a juſt diſlike was conceived againſt ſuch edged tools; it was, therefore, determined to make war upon ſickneſs, in a manner leſs hoſtile to the human conſtitution.

Indeed, if any man has found by ſad experience, that in the adminiſtration of drugs, it is very uncertain whether he ſhall kill or cure, it will do credit both to his humanity and integrity, when he ſhall adopt a method at once profitable and harmleſs: and certainly, he who takes another's purſe, robs him of traſh, when compared with the man, who diſtributes miſery or death in every doſe.*

As

* The practice of Animal Magnetiſm hath often proved the laſt reſource of an ignorant and hardy adventurer; and a fellow unfit to preſcribe Phyſick for a horſe, has ſuddenly become a great Phyſician, on aſſuming the character of a Magnetiſer.

As a man of learning, you are doubtleſs acquainted with the admirable relations upon record, of the power of myſtical ſounds, when uttered by an old woman over a diſeaſed perſon; of the extraordinary virtue of Magical Characters, of Love Philtres, and Amulets: and you certainly know ſomething of the wonder-working weapon-ſalve, and the famous ſympathetic powder, the former of which was applied to the weapon to heal the wound; and the latter could ſtop the moſt dangerous hæmorrhages, at a moderate diſtance. But all theſe accounts, which have been generally treated as fabulous, are more than realized in the powers and effects of Animal Magnetiſm. Let me intreat you, Sir, to reſtrain your ſcepticiſm upon this point, till I have fully explained myſelf; nor haſtily reject my aſſertion as incredible, becauſe it may ſurpaſs your comprehenſion.

The interpoſition of any portion of ſpace, between the Doctor and his patient, can form no obſtacle to the action of the Magnetic fluid. If any diſeaſed perſon ſhall communicate to the Doctor the place of his reſidence, although he ſhall be an inhabitant of another kingdom, he is as much under the power of our great diſpenſer of Magnetic influence, as if he lived in the next ſtreet. Many people have received cures while they were travelling, by giving the Magnetiſer a

plan

plan of their journey, and one of our people in London, actually cured an old woman of blindneſs, when ſhe was making the tour of Wales.

You know that ſick people are ſometimes ſtrangely perverſe, and obſtinately refuſe to take the benefits that are offered to them; here we can again boaſt a manifeſt ſuperiority over medicine, for we have no occaſion to pour the drugs by force down the throat of a refractory patient, he may be ſilently cured, without his knowledge and concurrence. Thus, like the Aſtronomer, who was intruſted with the diſtribution of ſhowers and ſun-ſhine to the whole globe, the operators in Magnetiſm when ſitting in their cloſets, may be employed in curing Cataracts in Greenland, the Gout in China, the Leproſy in Egypt, and the Yaws in America. The doctors are perfectly agreed, that their influence upon a patient at any diſtance is equally powerful; but they confeſs, that when this ſubtile fluid is propelled beyond a certain limited ſpace, it is apt to become ungovernable, ſo that they always wiſh to conduct it by the means of a ſhorter rein. If the diſeaſe ſhould happen to be ſituated externally, and ſo can be fairly repreſented by the pencil, let the patient only tranſmit its picture once a week to the operator, and the cure will go on without any inconvenience.

Behold, Sir, a perfect contraſt to the abominable practices recorded in the Hiſtories of Witchcraft and Sorcery; theſe infernal wretches employed their art, in tormenting French and Scottiſh Kings, by ſticking little waxen images full of pins, and roaſting them before a ſlow fire; while the Magnetic Doctor exerciſes his talents upon pictures and images, with the moſt kind and benevolent intentions.

Do not, I beſeech you, miſunderſtand me, as if I meant to inſinuate, that the Magnetiſers are a tribe of Magicians and Conjurers; nor ſuffer your imagination to fancy, that there is ſome reſemblance between their pretenſions, and the boaſtings of thoſe who deal with the Devil. A Man of Science will form a more juſt eſtimate of their real character, and leave theſe chimera's to the credulous vulgar.

Some Philoſophers have objected againſt our diſtant operations, by aſſerting, that no material ſubſtance can act, where it is not preſent under ſome form. But this is mere *gratis dictum*. What do we know about proximity or remoteneſs? Perhaps there are no two particles of matter in the univerſe that actually touch one another, and yet they exerciſe reciprocal actions: beſides, nearneſs and diſtance are mere arbitary terms, ſo that as one of our Lecturers very well obſerved, Edinburgh may for ought we know, be

be as much in the neighbourhood of London, as Iſlington. I cannot at preſent bring forward all the reaſons by which this ſublime Hypotheſis is maintained; but the Lectures of our Profeſſors, contain every thing that can be wiſhed for upon the ſubject.

If I have hitherto been reciting to you a narration replete with the marvellous, the conſtellation of wonders, contains a ſtar much brighter than any that has yet been viewed. Pardon my figurative language, for I want words to expreſs that tranſcendental faculty, by which the Magnetic Doctor can transfer diſeaſes from one ſubject to another, with the ſame facility that you can pour wine out of a bottle into the decanter; and this ſimile will hold in another part, for as wine is decanted in order to be again taken out, ſo the diſeaſe is tranſplanted, that it may be more conveniently expelled. When I was a child, I remember, the nurſe uſed to transfer whitlows from our fingers into the ear of a cat, to our great comfort, but to the inexpreſſible torment of the poor animal; the Magnetiſer, however, in his ſuperabundant benevolence, transfers the complaints of his patients to himſelf, and afterwards runs the riſk of expelling them from his own body. I am quite at a loſs to conjecture, whether you will more admire the power of the Doctor, or his eminent humanity.

In former days, when a regular exorciſer undertook to diſpoſſeſs the body of a demoniac, he would either ſend the demon into the Red Sea, or impriſon him in the bowels of the earth; he had not, like our doctors, the courage to engage his adverſary in cloſe quarters.—I alſo defy the medical world to produce ſuch an example of rare benevolence: Where is the Phyſician, for inſtance, that would be willing to take the Gout, the Colic, or the Stone from his Patients, and then undergo the danger and fatigue, of combating theſe formidable enemies in his own territories? *

It muſt, indeed, be acknowledged, that the act of tranſplantation, induces a material change in the form of the diſeaſe, ſo that the operator does not become the ſubject of the ſpecific complaint which he tranſlates, but only experiences a general inconvenience. As you will probably be curious to know in what manner the doctor is affected by this transfer, I will relate the uſual mode of its operation. No ſooner is a diſeaſe expelled from his wonted reſidence, than like a wild beaſt attacked in his den, he ruſhes furiouſly upon his opponent; the firſt onſet ſomewhat reſembles the conflict of an Acid with an

* Here then we have a ſpecimen of a true medical Metempſychoſis, where mens diſeaſes, like their ſouls, being violently diſlodged, are compelled to ſhift about for new habitations.

an Alkali, for there is a powerful effervescence in the Magnetiser's stomach, and such a sedition in his entrails, that he becomes puffed up like a man in a Tympany. This obstructed flatulence he soons expels in a very sensible manner, at every convenient outlet, and he declares his victory in the language of a genuine ventriloquist.*

Thus the Magnetiser by voluntarily exposing himself to the pains and infirmities of his patients, is constrained to suffer for the benefit of society, a daily series of cruel martyrdoms.

I am, Sir,

Yours, &c.

* As there are certain people who attach themselves to peculiar operations, as Oculists, Aurists, &c. so the Magnetisers generally make the lower intestines the theatre of their exploits. All their powers and prognostics smell strongly of the water-closet; and from the nasty tricks they play in the presence of their patients, one might be induced to suspect, that like the antient Egyptians they worship the *Crepitum ventris*. *Ed.*

LETTER V.

LONDON.

SIR,

WHEN the effects of Animal Magnetiſm firſt became generally known, there was a ſomething in its operations, ſo far ſurpaſſing the comprehenſions of the multitude, that they were regarded as miraculous. The maſters of this Science, found it rather difficult to decide upon the beſt way in which mankind ſhould be directed to conceive of its atchievements, whether they ſhould refer them to natural cauſes, or lay claim to ſupernatural powers; and this difficulty was farther augmented, by their not being preciſely clear, with reſpect to the nature of the powers of which they were conſcious. They concluded however, that there could be no impropriety in hinting at the efficacy of FAITH, when acting conjointly with Animal Magnetiſm; and as for the unbelieving, and profane, they were left to take the ſole chance of Magnetiſm uncombined. I am aware, that many of the graver ſort of people, have been greatly ſcandalized, at our hinting a neceſſary connexion of this New Science with Religion, but they were probably

bably ignorant of the ſurpriſing moral effects which it has wrought upon many of its diſciples.

I do not intend to inſiſt upon the introduction of it as an auxiliary to religion; nor do I approve of our openly arrogating ſupernatural powers. This is very delicate ground, for it might lead to a controverſy, whether, ſuppoſing the facts we have adduced to be authentic, the effects are to be aſcribed to Divine, or Diabolical agency. Diſcuſſions of this nature are attended with ſo many inconveniencies, that we wiſh carefully to avoid them. I ſhall, therefore, content myſelf with hinting thus much in favour of the co-operation of Faith, that obſtinate incredulity will diſarm Magnetiſm of all its powers, and entirely prevent the unhappy infidel, from deriving any benefit from this ſalutary remedy.

But while the ſubject of this New Science, agitates and divides the minds of ſo many people, I am happy to ſee the number of illuſtrious and reſpectable names, which dignify the liſt of converts to Magnetiſm. We can boaſt of diſciples in both houſes of Parliament; many worthy Gentlemen in the church, may be ranked among its ableſt maſters, and warmeſt defenders; and even a *remnant* among the faculty, have had the liberality to diveſt themſelves of prejudice, and become ſtudents in the ſchool of Magnetiſm.

tiſm. There is, indeed, one claſs of men, upon which we have hitherto been unable to make the leaſt impreſſion; I mean the Philoſophers,—a race of men notorious for incredulity reſpecting all the occult ſciences: we have accordingly determined to regard them as incorrigible.

I have ſometimes amuſed myſelf with Speculations, upon the unparalled advantages that may reſult, from the introduction of Animal Magnetiſm into the great council of the nation. If the miniſter fears oppoſition in ſome favorite motion from a turbulent orator, he may by the eloquence of his fingers, conſign the troubleſome member to ſleep; or if the Gentleman be already upon his legs, thundering out invectives againſt mal-adminiſtration, he may find this Demoſthenes other employment, by throwing him into a Criſis. You will probably ſay, that this power may prove a dangerous engine in the hands of a corrupt adminiſtration; but remember Sir, the Patriots may avail themſelves of the ſame weapon, ſo that on a day of public buſineſs, St. Stephen's would exhibit a motley ſcene of members found aſleep, or rolling in convulſions. This would form a new æra in the hiſtory of miniſterial influence; and our Senators would then ſeek as eagerly for an antidote againſt the powers of Magnetiſm, as for a remedy againſt the bite of a mad dog.

It is my private opinion however, that the communication of this power, ought to be laid under certain reſtrictions. Evil-minded and deſigning men, (if any ſuch can become Magnetiſers) might produce great miſchief, and confuſion, in the world, by the miſapplication of this potent inſtrument. Our Legiſlature might be interrupted in the digeſting of ſalutary laws; magiſtrates might be arreſted in the execution of juſtice; and even the Pulpit be expoſed to a new ſpecies of inſult. An unlucky fellow inſtead of pelting a preacher with ſtones, would more effectually ſpoil his ſermon, by throwing him into a *Criſis*. But the prevention of theſe and ſuch like abuſes, I reſign to the wiſdom of our Law-givers.

I have often been curious to know, why our clerical diſciples betrayed ſuch eagerneſs to become adepts in the Science. They cannot exhibit attainments of this kind in the Pulpit, nor ought their gown to permit them to follow it as a lucrative profeſſion; and if they Magnetiſe *gratis*, this great generoſity may prove injurious to thoſe, who may be ſaid, "By this craft to get their wealth," We are very ſenſible of the honour they confer upon us, by entering into our Society; and the contempt and perſecution, which they voluntarily ſuffer in the common cauſe, merit our warmeſt expreſſions of gratitude. But it would probably

be more for the common intereſt, if they were contented to aſſiſt us by their prayers and good wiſhes. Don't think, Sir, that I ſay this from mercenary motives, I can aſſure you, it is for their ſake, rather than ours, that I deliver this opinion.

The great openneſs, with which the Magnetic profeſſors have communicated their inſtructions, ſeems likely to be attended with ſome inconvenience. Curioſity, or ambition, has prompted many plain uneducated men to emerge from obſcurity, by acquiring a knowledge of this occult ſcience; hence tradeſmen have quitted their ſhops, and clerks their counting-houſes, to become proficients in Animal Magnetiſm. For my own part, I do not approve of thus expoſing the Arcana of our art to ſuch an indiſcriminate company; and I am rather apprehenſive, that the inveſtigation of ſo profound a ſubject, may produce unfavourable effects upon the brains of men, whoſe ſtudies never extended farther than the doctrines of loſs and gain. The number of operators is already quite adequate to the public demand, ſo that our friends may be ſupplied with Animal Magnetiſm, for their own uſe, and the benefit of their families, at a moderate expence, without expoſing themſelves to the dangers incidental to learned enquiry.

I have now, Sir, enumerated ſeveral peculiar advantages, medical, moral, and political,

litical, that may be derived from the due management of Animal Magnetiſm, I ſhall briefly ſuggeſt another, which muſt be a very intereſting one to the polite world.

When a Gentleman pays a morning viſit to a Lady, it may ſo happen, that a dearth of news, and a barrenneſs of invention, ſhall ſo ſpitefully jump together, that the *tête à tête* will be likely to prove a ſcene of perfect inſipidity; but if the viſitor happens to be an adept in this ſcience, the embarraſſment cannot be of long duration. It may ſoon be faſhionable to aſk the Lady, if ſhe chooſes to be Magnetiſed; and this diverting employment will at all times prove an infallible relief to a dull converſation. It has been violently ſuſpected, that this has operated as a powerful motive with many young people of fortune, to learn the Art and Science of Magnetiſing,

I have now, Sir, delivered to you a fair and authentic account of the nature and qualities of Animal Magnetiſm; the ſucceſs of this attempt to remove your incredulity, can only be decided by time and experience.

I remain, Sir,

Yours, &c.

THE APPENDIX.

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THE ironical ſtile employed in the preceding letters, ſeems to have been intended to expoſe Animal Magnetiſm, with its abettors, to ridicule and contempt. And upon a ſubject ſo truly contemptible, it was perhaps, as good a method as could have been adopted. Argument and candid examination would be entirely miſplaced, when directed againſt men, who poſſeſs neither ſcience nor honeſty. But although the artful Ringleaders of this ſcheme of fraud and impoſition are too deſpicable to deſerve any other notice, than that which the law has aſſigned for vagrants and fortune-tellers; yet the ſimple credulity of great numbers, (of whom better things might have been expected) ſeemed to render it neceſſary, that ſome attempt ſhould be made, to reſcue them from this ſpreading deluſion.

On comparing the general account of Animal Magnetiſm, as it is exhibited in the foregoing pages, with the reſult of a very diligent

diligent enquiry, both among the operators and patients, I am ſo far from conſidering it as a caricature, that it might have been carried much farther, without at all violating the truth. No fanatics ever divulged notions more wild and extravagant; no impudent empiric ever retailed promiſes more prepoſterous, or hiſtories of cures more devoid of reality, than the tribe of Magnetiſers. It is now my intention, as Editor, to make a few obſervations, upon ſome of the particular facts that are brought forward in the foregoing Letters.

I. Theſe men abound with noiſy pretenſions to Science and Philoſophy; and with people that are poſſeſſed of neither, a myſtical jargon delivered with eaſe and effrontery, will have a mighty effect. But there is a general ſtrain of inconſiſtency, and evaſion, in their manner of propagating the knowledge, they affect to have attained. Sometimes they boaſt of performing all theſe wonderful things, by the interpoſition of ſome fluid, which nobody but themſelves knows any thing about; and when you inquire where it is, and what are its properties, you are told upon one occaſion, that it circulates through the whole earth; at another time, it is contained in the body of every individual; then you are to ſeek it in the body of the Doctor; and by and by, it comes out, that they are not ſure, whether there may be any material

material fluid or no ;—perhaps their operations are performed by ſome occult quality, or by Sympathy. The farce of profound Science is carried ſtill farther, by the formal delivery of Lectures upon Magnetiſm : and ſome people have been found in almoſt every claſs of Society, who would pay from twenty five to fifty guineas, ſign a bond, and take a ſolemn oath of ſecrecy into the bargain, that they might have the privilege of hearing a ſet of ſenſeleſs harangues, which nobody ever did, or ever can underſtand.

In this country, indeed, a man may utter nonſenſe, and vend it at his own price ; but there ſeems to be ſome impropriety, in permitting them to adminiſter oaths of ſecrecy to their credulous hearers. There cannot be a more likely method adopted, to prevent the detection of any ſcheme of villainy, than to expoſe its dupes to the hazard of perjury, in giving a proper information againſt the authors. It may be very properly inquired, why is all this darkneſs and myſtery employed, if there be no fraud or juggle in the caſe ? and reaſonable people will be ſtrongly inclined to ſuſpect, that where a buſineſs ſhrinks from the light, and dares not ſubmit to a fair examination, there muſt be ſomething very weak, or very wicked, interwoven in its fabric.

II. When theſe men firſt began their practices in this kingdom, they contrived

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to work upon the fancies of weak and irritable women, ſo as to throw them into Hyſteric fits; and to theſe convulſions they gave the name of *Criſis*. Some violent effects were neceſſary to be produced, to awaken the attention of the populace; and this was a trick of known efficacy, for it has often been too ſucceſsfully employed by the moſt wretched impoſtors, who have by arts like theſe, ſupported a claim to a ſupernatural miſſion. It ſeems, however, that theſe bodily agitations are not eſſential to the ſucceſs of the ſcheme; they have anſwered their purpoſe, and now give place to a milder, and leſs alarming practice.*

There are ſome circumſtances attending this part of the impoſture, that greatly expoſe the credulity of the people. They find no difficulty in believing, that an arrogant buffoon by making ſome ridiculous motions with his fingers, can throw any perſon into convulſions.—They believe, alſo, that theſe people, when actually convulſed, are in a very proper ſtate for enquiring into the nature of diſeaſes; and they believe likewiſe, that any of the Doctor's accomplices, when in this condition, can ſee through all the cover-

* The reaſon for this alteration is very obvious. Very dangerous conſequences have followed from exciting theſe convulſions, ſo as to put the health of the ſufferers, and the credit of the Magnetiſers, into a very perilous ſituation.

coverings of the body, natural and artificial, into the very bowels of his Patients. The very recital of abſurdities like theſe, muſt ſhock every perſon of ſenſe and integrity: and yet this thin veil of impoſture, has not prevented people of all ranks, from becoming the prey of theſe audacious pretenders.*

III. It was formerly charged upon the Jeſuits, that they had a ſcheme of religion, adapted to the different taſtes of people with whom they had intercourſe; and a method like this, is every day practiſed by the Magnetiſers. If a man of ſome pretenſions to learning, enquires after its nature, he is aſſured it is ſtrictly Philoſophical and rational; that there is no claim to any powers or effects but ſuch as are natural. But let a ſimple credulous perſon apply, and he is given to underſtand, that it has no ſort of relation to

* This ſpecies of Divination is not the peculiar offspring of Magnetiſm. Many years ago, the city of Paris was infeſted with vagrants, who offered to convince any perſon that would pay them, that their Eyes could pierce through the moſt opake ſubſtances. They pretended to know the contents of any box made of gold, ſilver, or wood; and more than this, they offered to repeat the contents of any letter, written at the diſtance of ſeveral miles, provided the perſon would write it in the preſence of a particular clock, which they affirmed, would repeat again every thing that was tranſacted in its preſence. What is rather ſingular, they ſeemed to perform what they ſo boldly promiſed, and with ſuch ſucceſs, as to impoſe upon ſome men of education, who believed that theſe people had diſcovered "*a new agent in nature.*"

to medicine, or human means; but is a ſomething, on which his own imagination may confer a name.

With ſome religious people, it has been attempted to be paſſed off as a miraculous operation; and, upon certain occaſions, it has been found convenient to give dark hints at the power and efficacy of Faith, when its actings were directed this way. Timid people, who could ſwallow by wholeſale all the abſurdities that have been propagated concerning miraculous cures, have, at times, expreſſed ſome apprehenſion leſt theſe men ſhould be performing all their feats by a diabolical compact; but the good which they fancied was done, ſoothed their minds into tranquillity upon this point. In ſhort, Animal Magnetiſm has been a ſubtle fluid; it has been ſympathy; it has been Faith and prayer; it has been ſpiritual influence; or, it has been any thing that ſeemed to ſuit the diſpoſition of the preſent inquirer.

In an age which pretends to ſo much illumination as the preſent, it muſt appear very extraordinary, that it ſhould be neceſſary to employ arguments to prove that a Phyſical effect, cannot be produced without a Phyſical cauſe: that men cannot cure diſeaſes without employing adequate remedies; and that the drawing figures and characters in the air, cannot affect a ſick perſon at the diſtance of a hundred miles! I will venture

to ſuggeſt to thoſe people, whoſe faith is not to be ſtaggered by the want of probability, that the ſame drug which would prove ſalutary in a ſmall doſe, may prove poiſonous in a larger: if Magnetiſm, therefore, be ſo powerful a remedy, it is capable of being employed in executing the moſt deſtructive purpoſes; and deſtructive in a way the moſt dangerous, becauſe the moſt ſecret. For the Magnetiſer, without attacking the lives of men by dagger, or poiſon, might aſſaſſinate in every family, with the moſt perfect impunity.

Now, is there a diſciple, poſſeſſed of common ſenſe and integrity, who will ſeriouſly declare, that he really believes all this to be very poſſible? If ſuch a believer as this can be found, I am ſure he is bound as a good citizen, to exert his beſt endeavours to baniſh theſe dangerous people, not only from the community, but out of the world: And thoſe who cannot digeſt ſo much of the marvellous, by encouraging the impoſture, deſerve to be regarded as their aſſociates in infamy. How can the ſame men pretend to any conſiſtency, when they affect to deſpiſe the Hiſtories of Witchcraft, and Sorcery, and yet profeſſedly give credit to ſtories equally improbable, with any that are related by the moſt credulous Hiſtorian? It would be manifeſtly ridiculous to pretend, that there is no analogy between the boaſted feats of Con-

Conjurors and Magnetiſers; the reſemblance will ſtrictly hold in every reſpect except this, that the Magnetiſer is the more able Magician of the two.

IV. We learn from the hiſtory of human nature, that the more illiterate part of the community, from their proneneſs to ſuperſtition, have moſt commonly become the prey of arrogant impoſtors. But the modern tribe of Magnetic Jugglers, have had the fineſſe to ſeduce characters, the moſt exalted and reſpectable. What muſt be the aſtoniſhment of poſterity, to read, that members of the Britiſh Senate, have ſo far forgotten their dignity, as to countenance the moſt worthleſs foreigners, in their flagrant impoſitions upon the Public: to read, that they have become their aſſociates and co-adjutors; have liſtened with gravity to Lectures fraught with the moſt profound nonſenſe; have learnt the tricks and grimace of knaviſh buffoons, and thus equipped, they have iſſued forth as Magnetiſers, offering their ſervices among their friends and acquaintance.

It is really difficult to know in what manner to addreſs theſe noble and honourable characters, who have thus ſullied their dignity, and diſhonoured their underſtandings. The Education of a Gentleman, ought to render him a competent judge between Philoſophy, and Legerdemain; between a rati-

onal propoſition, and nonſenſical jargon. I muſt therefore, frankly acknowledge, that to me it appears one of the greateſt and moſt ſingular effects of Magnetiſm, that it ſhould poſſeſs the power to infatuate and bewilder, the intellects of men, who upon many other occaſions, are capable of acting an uſeful, and creditable part in ſociety.

V. Men of avowed licentious principles, have embraced many opportunities, to inſult the friends of Chriſtianity, upon the weakneſs and credulity of the orthodox. But Magnetic attraction ſeems to have levelled all diſtinctions; ſo that believers, and unbelievers, Turks, Jews, and Schiſmatics, may be found mingled together in the number of its diſciples. If it were once thought a ſtrange thing to meet Epicurus in a heathen temple; How much more ſtrange is it, to ſee a rational Infidel, who could never find ſatisfactory evidence of the truth of Chriſtianity, now admitting with implicit faith, all the doctrines taught by the great Apoſtles of Magnetiſm! Men who deny the perpetual providence of the Creator, can believe, that a wretched impoſtor in London, daily controls the health and lives of their fellow creatures in different parts of the Globe. They do not believe that God ever endowed any one with power to open the Eyes of the blind; and yet they believe, that without any divine aſſiſtance, a man can confer the

gift

gift of ſeeing through the moſt opaque bodies. They cannot perceive any thing conſonant to reaſon, or juſtice, in vicarious ſufferings; and yet they admit that a Magnetiſer can transfer the Phyſical evils of his fellow creatures to his own body, ſo that "*himſelf ſhall take their ſickneſſes, and bear their infirmities.*." A miracle, according to theſe Gentlemen, is in its own nature impoſſible; and yet they believe, that their maſter by making a few circles in the Air, can perform miraculous cures, equal to any upon record: but what is more, they alſo believe, that the Magnetic Apoſtles can confer upon themſelves, the power of working miracles equally extraordinary. When men have attained to ſuch a meaſure of faith, that they can receive and propagate tales, equally ridiculous with any that diſgrace the legends of the darkeſt ages; we muſt either ſhrewdly ſuſpect the honeſty of their ſceptical declarations upon certain points, or rejoice to obſerve that, among Infidels, may be found the leaſt rational, and the moſt credulous of all mankind.

VI. This abſurd buſineſs, is likewiſe ſaid to receive countenance and ſupport, from many reſpectable miniſters, both in the eſtabliſhed church, and among the diſſenters. Their motives for ſtanding forth as advocates in ſo ſtrange a cauſe, may do credit to their hearts; but the intereſts of humanity do not require

require any man to lay aſide his underſtanding: and the plea of a good intention, is a very inſufficient excuſe, for the man who expoſes not only his own character, but his profeſſion, and even religion itſelf, to the inſults of profane men, for the ſake of defending a piece of contemptible quackery.

Some of theſe reverend Gentlemen have learned the art and myſtery of Magnetiſm, to the great edification of thoſe, who have long been accuſtomed to regard prieſts and empirics as ſimilar characters. It may be preſumed, however, that clergymen are no more intereſted in the ſcience and practice of Magnetiſm, than in tumbling, or rope-dancing; and if their curioſity ſhould induce them to learn the art of picking locks, and inverting pockets, it would be not leſs laudable, than that which carries them to the lectures of Magnetiſers: and I am fully perſuaded that a clergyman has as much buſineſs with Magic, as with Magnetiſm, in the performance of his paſtoral function.

Reverend Sirs, you are believers in the Chriſtian Revelation, and in Animal Magnetiſm; and you defend the authenticity of each in the ſame way, by the evidence of miracles. Suppoſe it were to be inquired, How you diſtinguiſh between the miracles recorded in ſcripture, and thoſe related by the profeſſors of this new art?

I am,

I am perſuaded you would be ſome time in finding a ſatisfactory anſwer. To reply, that the Magnetiſers lay no claim to miraculous powers, would be a mere ſubterfuge, a verbal evaſion; for wherever a true miracle is performed, the agency of ſome ſupernatural power is implied. If any man ſhould remove a mountain by ſtretching out his finger, you would grant the interference of an agent more than human; and if by a ſimilar motion, diſeaſes can be chaſed from the bodies of the ſick, are theſe effects leſs ſupernatural?

The very ſame arguments, that would prove the mighty works done by the Apoſtles of Chriſt, to be genuine miracles, would be equally concluſive in favour of the mighty feats boaſted by the Magnetiſers. If you be thus reduced to acknowledge the preſence of a ſupernatural power, we muſt next inveſtigate its nature, and inquire whether theſe operations be diabolical, or Divine? You cannot eſteem them to be divine, without deſerving the ſolemn reproof that Peter once delivered to that ancient impoſtor, Simon the Magician; and charity forbids one to ſuppoſe, that you ſuſpect diabolical agency.

But it is very poſſible, that ſome of theſe marvellous ſtories, which you have helped to circulate, are groſs miſtakes, and that the greater part are impudent falſehoods; What then will be your reflections when the bubble

bubble burſts, and the whole ſcheme of this atrocious impoſition ſhall be openly detected? The time cannot be very diſtant, when the moſt faſcinated advocate for this Medico-religious buffoonery, will be aſhamed of, and confounded at, his ſimple credulity. The intereſted agents in this buſineſs, are too low and contemptible, to ſuffer the indignation of an inſulted publick; but upon you, their tools and abettors, will the ponderous load of infamy deſcend; an Infamy, that may ſtain the glory of all your former labours, and greatly obſtruct your future uſefulneſs. A well gounded charge of credulity and fanaticiſm, muſt unnerve all that your zeal, your learning, and piety, may attempt; and the meaneſt of your hearers, may think it a ſufficient reaſon for deſpiſing all that you may preach, when he ſhall ſay, This Man was a Magnetiſer!—

7. Quacks and Impoſtors have commonly been moſt ſucceſsful in their depredations, upon the lower ranks of people, who are always remarkably attached to the marvellous. The common venders of noſtrums, have alſo generally given the people ſomething ſubſtantial for their money; but quackery in this improved ſtate, operates upon the body, by diſordering the imagination, and cannot boaſt of one effect, but where the victim of credulity has been previouſly deluded by hope, or terrified with apprehenſion.

It

It has been thought a ſufficient reply to any one who urges that Magnetiſm operates only upon the fancy, that "we may daily witneſs the moſt remarkable FACTS, which are performed by this new agent in nature." When any matter of fact is brought before the mind, with ſufficient evidence of its truth, it muſt be admitted; but we are not obliged to grant any concluſion which the relator may pleaſe to infer. I believe, that timorous people have fallen into fits, at the time they were expoſed to the tricks and grimace of a Magnetiſer; that the ſtomach and bowels have ſuffered great commotions; and that ſome diſtempers gradually diſappeared after theſe diſturbances had been excited. The ſimple facts are admitted for truths, and the cauſe I aſſign, is mental perturbation. Nothing can betray greater weakneſs of the underſtanding, than for a man to pretend that he has rightly aſſigned the cauſe, when he has only ſimply proved the fact, and who expects the ſame deference to be paid to his Logical deductions, that we give to the teſtimony of his ſenſes.

Before a man undertakes to ſhow, that any one Phenomenon is effected by ſome agent or power, it is incumbent upon him to prove the exiſtence of that agent, or his theory will be a mere rope of ſand. Now

the exiſtence of ſuch an Agent as the Magnetiſers boaſt of, is a mere chimera, its reality never has, and never can be proved: on a fair and candid examination into this matter in France, they were pronounced to be a ſet of vile impoſtors, and were prohibited by royal Authority, from continuing their infamous practices.*

It has been often urged, that "If good be done by theſe men, why ſhould we be ſo ſcrupulous about the means that they employ?" This is indeed an argument worthy of ſuch a cauſe, and would vindicate highway-robbery and aſſaſſination, as well as Magnetiſm.

He who pretends that the end will juſtify the means, is either a weak, or a wicked man, and is qualified to be an advocate for the groſſeſt enormities that have ever been committed. Fraud, and deceit, are in their own nature, highly criminal; and whatever ſuppoſed benefits may reſult from employing

* In order to elude the force of what the Royal Academicians brought againſt this impoſture in France; the Magnetiſers in England, pretend to renounce all affinity with their foreign brethren. They tell us, that what they practice is "commonly called Animal Magnetiſm;" but in what the difference conſiſts, they have not vouchſafed to declare. But this is a paltry equivocation, for, however, there may be ſome little circumſtantial variations, the ſcheme is fundamentally and eſſentially the ſame; equally fooliſh, and equally fraudulent.

ing ſuch engines, the guilt of the perpetrator is not at all leſſened by his ſucceſs; and it becomes the duty of every good member of ſociety, to diſcountenance and expoſe ſuch dangerous characters.

But it is no new thing, to ſee men in diſtreſs, urged by fretfulneſs and impatience, forſake the uſe of lawful and natural means of relief, and attempting to extricate themſelves by practices of a very ſuſpicious nature. We have a very memorable inſtance of this, in the example of King Saul, who in the day of his calamity, ſought relief from the prohibited arts of a wretched old woman; —and it becomes his imitators to recollect the affecting reaſon he gives for this criminal conduct,—"I am ſore diſtreſſed—and God is departed from me,—therefore I have called thee."

THE END.